
SECURITY ASSISTANCE COMMUNITY

Dr. Larry A. Mortsof, Deputy Commandant of DISAM, Retires

Dr. Larry A. Mortsof, the Deputy Commandant of the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM) at Wright-Patterson AFB, was honored with a retirement ceremony at the DISAM Auditorium on November 17, 2000, recognizing his 35 years of civil and military service. Presiding over the ceremony was the DISAM Commandant, Colonel Judy-Ann Carroll, U.S. Army, and special guest was Robert Keltz, Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), Office of the Secretary of Defense.



Highlights of the ceremony included presentation of the Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Medal and the DSCA Exceptional Civilian Service Award to Dr. Mortsof. He was also awarded the titles of Professor Emeritus, DISAM, and Professor Emeritus, Defense Institute of International Legal Studies. The DISAM library was designated the Dr. Larry A. Mortsof Library. After the ceremony, Dr. Mortsof was “piped over the side,” a Navy tradition saluting the departure of a fellow officer, by all of the active duty military personnel assigned to DISAM, representing the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, and U.S. Air Force. The festivities concluded with a buffet lunch and “roast” at the Wright-Patterson Officers’ Club for numerous family and friends, including Dr. Mortsof’s wife Sue and their three children.

A native of Lafayette, Indiana, Dr. Mortsof has been affiliated with DISAM since October 1976 as a professor, the Director of Research, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the Deputy Commandant. One of the original team that created DISAM, Dr. Mortsof has in the last twenty years left his fingerprints on all facets of a school known world-wide for its positive effects on the conduct of security assistance.

As a faculty member, Dr. Mortsof was the epitome of those talents and qualities a professor at any level of education should exhibit. Thoroughly grounded in the subjects he taught, he was able to reach any student with lucid explanations of the intricacies of the arms transfer process. He mastered the tiniest detail, yet was able to present a credible view of any subject he taught.

As the Director of Research, he led the publication of the DISAM text, *The Management of Security Assistance*, to be used as a classroom reference. Beginning with his editorship, this

volume is now universally heralded as the encyclopedia of information needed by the practitioners of security assistance and is universally known to everyone in the profession as “The Green Book.” Recognizing the need to share practices on the conduct of security assistance management as well as to advise the community about policies and innovations in our profession, in the early 1980s, Dr. Mortsof created the quarterly *DISAM Journal*, now recognized around the world as a highly read, professionally produced periodical. His innovative ideas, incredible writing ability, and knowledge of security assistance continue to make this publication what it is today. His special writing talent is demonstrated not only in the *Journal* and the textbook, but also in the Institute’s catalog and other high-quality publications that have been produced on specific topics.

Originally, the Institute provided courses aimed at two basic blocs of customers, civilians in security assistance agencies in the U.S. and military personnel serving in American embassies abroad. As Dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. Mortsof moved to satisfy the needs of other stakeholders in security assistance, and he urged the expansion of our clientele to incorporate foreign purchasers and representatives of defense industry. He also foresaw the requirement to develop specialized training courses for different niches in our customer base, and his direct involvement in the implementation of courses in financial management, case management, and logistics assured their success. These courses support over 3,000 personnel in the military services and have contributed greatly to their ability to effectively manage the security assistance programs under their purview.

With his firm grasp of the mission of security assistance organizations, he moved DISAM away from being simply a purveyor of information in the classroom to producing software that could be used in embassies around the world to improve the management of their valuable programs. Relying upon the knowledge and talents of the DISAM faculty, Dr. Mortsof oversaw the development, production, and distribution of the automated systems to improve the management of training of foreign students and to manage the resources of the security assistance organization itself. These systems have become indispensable in the ability of these organizations to carry out their mission.

Dr. Mortsof’s personal leadership as the deputy commandant since January 1993 is also visible in the accomplishment of several significant successes during his tenure. As an educator, Dr. Mortsof sought to improve the Institute’s programs so that they were demonstrably among the best in the Department of Defense. He succeeded in receiving the recommendation from the American Council on Education that upper-level college credit be granted for all eligible DISAM courses. He has achieved the recognition that DISAM courses fulfill the continuing education requirements for DoD employees certified as acquisition professionals. He has started the process for institutional accreditation from the Council on Occupational Education. For these accomplishments, he is highly respected by the office of the DoD Chancellor for Education and Professional Development, since he personifies the educational zeal that DoD is trying to instill throughout the Department.

As a manager, Dr. Mortsof has been an active and vital participant in the DSCA strategic planning process. From the early focus groups to the creation of the DISAM business area plan, he has been engaged in creating a model that would guide our organization in its endeavor to be the premier agency in the security cooperation world. He has personally created the database software programs for tracking the DISAM and DSCA strategic plans, which has greatly enhanced their utility to security cooperation managers.

He has created a strong automation team to design, develop, and support software requirements for over one hundred security assistance organizations around the world while simultaneously supporting DISAM's own information technology needs. Because of DISAM's acclaim in developing software for the security assistance community, DSCA asked the institute to support the Congressional reporting required by Section 581 of the fiscal year 1999 foreign appropriations bill, which contained a significant new international training report for foreign military personnel. Under Dr. Mortsof's leadership, while confronted with a task of great magnitude and a short suspense, a white paper was proposed to collect a significant amount of information in the time period available. This plan simplified the complex data gathering tasks of the Departments of Defense and State and provided Congress with a simple, easy to use report. Ultimately this resulted in a 2,000 page summary and over 50,000 pages of detailed reports, both completed in an accurate and timely manner.



DISAM Commandant Colonel Judy-Ann Carroll presenting Larry Mortsof with the Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Medal.

Dr. Mortsof's contributions to the success of DISAM are enormous. His innovative ideas, devotion to the organization, and management skills have made the Institute what it is today. Many have claimed to be the father of DISAM, but Larry Mortsof is the person who should receive the credit.

On coming to DISAM, he was serving on active duty with the U.S. Navy, and he is now retired from the Naval Reserve with the rank of Captain, Supply Corps. He has a B.A. in economics and history from Purdue University, an M.S. in logistics management from the Air Force Institute of Technology, an M.S.A. in management engineering from George Washington

University, and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Cincinnati. Dr. Mortsolf and his family will continue to reside in Beavercreek, Ohio.